

Fletcher's Farming

STATE RIGHTS

FARMING MUST PAY OR THE NATION WILL PERISH - *Geo. B. Terrell.*

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ABOUT OLD AGE ASSISTANCE

BY FRED W. DAVIS

Old age assistance will be one of the most vexatious problems that will come before the next administration. The governor, no doubt, will recommend legislation along the lines of his campaign statements which were maximum old age assistance for all who are qualified under the constitutional amendment. The legislature can, of course, accept or reject such recommendation.

It is doubtful if the old age assistance amendment is well understood by the citizenship of this state. The amendment reads as follows: "The legislature shall have the power by GENERAL laws to provide, under such limitations and restrictions and regulations as may be deemed by the legislature expedient, for old age assistance and for the payment of same not to exceed fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per month EACH to actual bona fide citizens of Texas who are over the age of sixty-five (65) years: Provided that no habitual drunkard and no inmate of any state supported institution, while such inmate, shall be eligible for such old age assistance; provided further that the requirements for length of time of actual residence in Texas shall never be less than five (5) years during the nine (9) years immediately preceding the application for old age assistance and continuously for one (1) year immediately preceding such application."

"The legislature shall have the authority to accept from the government of the United States such financial aid for old age assistance as that government may offer not inconsistent with restrictions hereinbefore provided." (sec. 51 b, art. 3) This last paragraph shows that it was not the intention of this state to confine assistance to those only who can qualify under the Federal statute. It merely authorized the acceptance of Federal funds for all who come under the national statute and clearly shows two set-ups were contemplated. It is clear the legislature can put restrictions (financial and otherwise), and can provide for any amount not to exceed \$15.00 each per month. The legislature has not the authority, however, to grant different amounts to different persons, as is being done at present. The amendment does not merely omit giving the legislature such discretion, but directly prohibits its doing so. The amendment says the legislature may pass GENERAL laws upon the subject. Some of the brief definitions for the word GENERAL given by Webster's International Dictionary are as follows: "That which comprehends or relates to all." "Inclusively in a body." "Without exception." It is difficult to see how any circumspect judge could rule the legislature was empowered by this amendment to write laws full of ex-

ceptions; laws which do not apply to the recipients as a whole. The amendment says the legislature may provide for payments not to exceed fifteen dollars (\$15.00) EACH. Had the amendment contemplated different amounts to different persons it would have read not to exceed fifteen dollars (\$15.00) to any individual or classification.

Whether such restrictions as the amendment allows should be added is clearly a question of policy. The nominee for governor believes there should not be any restrictions. And his unprecedented endorsement shows the voters also believe there should be no restrictions. Restrictions which call for proven need for assistance

are not sound politically or fundamentally. Restrictions which grant arbitrary power to the administrators is the cause of nine-tenths of the politics which now surrounds the administration of the old age assistance law. Discretionary power always has been abused and always will be. If we continue to permit administrators to say to whom assistance shall be paid and how much to each individual, political friends will continue to be rewarded and political opponents punished. The legislature adopted the policy of giving assistance according to the standard of living of the applicants. Before assistance is granted a necessity for it must be proven but the greater the necessity

the less they get. Let somebody make good sense out of that.

Old age assistance should not be considered charity. Charity is humiliating to all recipients who have not lost self-respect. And to habitually grant it will destroy self-respect. Do old people wish to be considered the charity wards of the state? Do the sons and daughters of old people wish to have their aged parents considered as objects of charity and so treated, as at present? Do they wish to be placed in the public attitude of having abandoned their parents? For the state to set up a system of charity donations, determine who shall be recipients, how much they shall receive, is not only going further than any government should go but will surely kill the very spirit which has made America great. We should not tax thrift for the purpose of rewarding indolence. The humiliation and unfairness can be avoided only by treating all alike who are morally worthy and have reached the established age. As an individual, if I am going to be compelled to give to a charity fund I want to be assured, and have a right to be assured, that the party or parties who get my money are both needy and worthy. This is not possible under the direction of a political bureau. Under the present setup I know of many who are getting assistance that do not need it while many who do need it are not getting it. And this unfairness is more glaring when you consider the amounts allowed—a clearly usurped authority.

Aside from the afflicted unfortunates, such as the blind, insane, etc., why should one portion of our people be taxed to support another portion anyway? Success is sometimes unforeseen good fortune, but generally it is the result of hard work, planning and saving. Some will work hard and deny themselves in order to put aside something for a rainy day, then why should the government take away from them in order to sustain those who are lazy and improvident? The answer is it shouldn't. The government has no moral right to take the talent of the faithful servant and give it as a reward to those who made no use of theirs. The lack of success is sometimes caused by unforeseen and unavoidable misfortune, but it is often the result of indolence, free spending and lack of frugality. It is impossible to ascertain specifically the causes which make up our needy class. We can all, no doubt, name people who have tried hard but couldn't make the grade and can also name some who never cared or tried to possess any property. We cannot afford to create an assistance fund except upon the general principle that organized society will be better served as a whole and made

Pensions For Farmers

BY GEO. B. TERRELL

Giving pensions to people is now the fixed policy of the State and Federal Government. Following my recent article on this subject I desire to make it plain that if the Government is to pension industrial workers and government employes and the State is to pension teachers I shall contend for pensions for farmers, the most needy and most deserving class of citizens. This is a temporary expedient for a deplorable economic condition and can be stopped only when a sound and sensible farm program is adopted, which we do not have and have never had, notwithstanding the billions of dollars expended under the pretext of helping the farmers.

Railroad employes and industrial workers may strike and interrupt transportation and paralyze certain lines of industry and the world moves on, but let the farmers strike and hunger and starvation stalk abroad in the land and wreck and ruin follow the stopping of the plow.

The present farm program of crop control and reduced production bought with taxpayers money has failed and will continue to fail to solve the farm problem. It only helps the big planters and land corporations by giving them from ten thousand to fifteen thousand dollars to reduce acreage, while the small home owners and tenants receive their little pea checks ranging from thirty dollars to thirty cents. Under this plan the tenants are driven from the farms and go on relief rolls. It would be cheaper to pension the farmers after a certain number of years service and retire them and reduce production in that way rather than pay bounties for non-production.

This plan has reduced our exports of cotton from 9,193,000 bales in 1932 to 5,431,000 in 1937 and lost our foreign market. Production in

foreign countries has increased accordingly. If this government foolishness and waste of money is not stopped soon and a sound and profitable price for farm products is received the farmers will have to be pensioned to remain in business and produce enough to keep the rest of the people from starving.

The domestic allotment plan will be a great improvement over the present government policy and will bring some relief to the farmers. Allot to each farm family his prorata share of the basic crops domestically consumed and place an embargo against the importation of such products and fix a profitable price for the products domestically consumed; say 20 cts. per pound for cotton and one dollar and twenty-five cents per bushel for wheat. These prices will bring the farmers more money for half the crop than they now receive for the entire crop, and the surplus can be exported and sold at world prices as they are now sold, and this will restore our foreign market, increase the farmers income and give more purchasing power to buy the products of industries that are now languishing for want of customers. It will insure more stable and profitable prices and stop government bounties, for the factories would have to pay the prices set by the government for all products purchased as there would be no other source of supply and the government would not have to purchase any of the products or pay any bounties. While ANY PLAN OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL IS ILLEGAL UNDER THE CONSTITUTION, this plan is sounder and more sensible and will stabilize prices, secure more income and bring back prosperity, which has been "just around the corner" for six years.

Alto, Texas

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